




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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**NATURE CONSERVATION (SPECIAL WILDLIFE RESERVES) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (4.53 pm): I rise to make a short 10-minute contribution. I am very tempted to change the long title of the bill to the 'Lock Up Viable Land Nature Conservation Bill' because that is exactly what this bill is intended to do and that is exactly what the outcome will be in years to come.

We all support the maintenance and preservation of worthwhile, valuable green open space right across Queensland. This side of the House in particular has been very proactive in making that come to fruition. I am very proud of the fact that in my time on the Albert Shire Council we introduced a green levy to the south-east corner and we bought thousands of hectares with that green levy that all the ratepayers chipped in for. That was a very worthwhile exercise in preserving viable land. This particular legislation is all about adding to the percentages—the green land-grab targets locked up in numbers of hectares and percentages of Queensland—to satisfy the looney lefties with how much of Queensland they have actually locked up.

I refer back to one of the great pleasures I had in my council life of attending citizenship ceremonies and welcoming about 6,000 new Australian citizens. I want to draw an analogy here between this bill and the citizenship of Australia. We said in those citizenship ceremonies that there are many rights and privileges of becoming an Australian citizen and with this bill there are rights and privileges to that land, but associated with citizenship are obligations and responsibilities and in this bill there is no mention of obligations and responsibilities. In other words, when this land is locked up and forgotten about then, yes, it will be a good statistic to put in the *Courier-Mail* in terms of green credentials, but there is no mention of how we are going to manage the feral pests, cats, foxes, pigs and dogs that are going to be utilising these special wildlife reserves and creating havoc for other people.

This will not occur only in western areas and grazing areas. I can just see this legislation being applied across Springbrook and some of the grazing land there where Dr Aila Keto, leader of the green bandwagon, if you like, has resided for many years. It will be used to lock up particular blocks of land in perpetuity. As our shadow minister pointed out to the House, trying to remove that locked up viable land syndrome will be very, very difficult and will have to be done through the House in the future.

Bill Potts is a great solicitor from the Gold Coast and president of the Law Society. When he says it is bad law, then it is bad law. I notice the member for Toohey agreeing and smiling over there. As a lawyer extraordinaire, he agrees with the president of the Law Society that this is bad law. If the member for Toohey was not worried about other matters in Toohey, then he might be a bit more keen to espouse the problem he has with this being good law or bad law. We would like to get an opinion but I am sure that will not be forthcoming at the current time.

The fact is that this is just a green levy grab. On the Gold Coast, we were able to put away green areas. We purchased them. One example is Green Heart at Merrimac, right in the middle of the Gold Coast.

Mr McDonald: Great decision.

Mr STEVENS: That was absolutely a great decision. It is a wonderful part, and in the years to come as the Gold Coast grows to over a million people then there will be this big green space but it is not a special wildlife reserve. There will at least be obligations on that community to look after that reserve and preserve it, and there will not be dogs, cats and feral pigs running around—

Mr McDonald: Or feral people.

Mr STEVENS: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. That is the proper way to approach the preservation of valuable, good green space right across Queensland—not this very blatant land grab to build up the numbers to satisfy the green elements out there that look at the numbers and the statistics of hectares across Queensland. That is why, unfortunately, this particular piece of legislation will threaten the farmers who live next to these blocks of land. It will put another onus on them when managing their own farms, with the extra problems from these special wildlife reserves. It can be guaranteed that the build-up of timber and other flammable material on these special wildlife reserves will put at risk these property owners in times of bushfires et cetera and will put another financial burden on the people who abut these special wildlife reserves.

The legislation is flawed. The Law Society has quite clearly enunciated that it is a bad law and yet we are pushing forward. It will most likely pass on the numbers in the House this evening. Unfortunately, it will be another demonstration of how beholden this Palaszczuk Labor government is to the green push, the loony left in the party associated with some other members of the party—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir): Member for Mermaid Beach, it now being time for the private member's motion I ask that you move the debate be adjourned.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.